



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2019, 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Chris Todd, Regular Member Donna Resutek, and Alternate Bryan Platt

ABSENT: Chairman Sean Kelly, Regular Member David Hurley, and Alternate Stefanie Cunningham

STAFF

PRESENT: Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Christine Post, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairman Chris Todd called the Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 7:02 PM in the Ellington Town Hall Annex, 57 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (on non-agenda items): None

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Houlihan attends the monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, Economic Development and Executive Committee. She reported the Chamber completed the biennial fundraising auction successfully, and explained a change in staffing at the Chamber.

2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

The commission discussed the new Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), specifically the agricultural aspects to economic development and promoting farm friendly regulations, i.e. hayrides and farm breweries. Ms. Houlihan suggested the commission put together a formal proposal to refer to the Planning and Zoning Commission to amend the zoning regulations.

Ms. Houlihan referred to the recommendations in POCD regarding establishing an agricultural commission. She will work with the Conservation Commission on this initiative via formal charter revision and look for local farmers to serve on the board. Vice Chairman Todd suggested reviewing this section as homework and discussing it at the next meeting.

3. Report: Connecticut Economic Development Association Best Practices

Ms. Houlihan suggested reviewing the non-checked boxes of the CEDAS application criteria to prepare for next year. She verified the town qualified and was awarded best practices recognition, however, she anticipates a higher level of accomplishment will be required in the coming years. Ms. Houlihan reported new permitting software was launched this Monday which she is hopeful can be expanded to include land use commission business. If not, then possibly coordinate with Barbra Galovich, Land Use Assistant, to create a platform for hosting commission business items. Ms. Houlihan agreed with Vice Chairman Todd that a workflow chart could be accomplished within a month or two for review. It was discussed that offering joint inspections is a coordination issue requiring more time. Ms. Houlihan will update the website to indicate she is the point person in connection with criteria number 16. Vice Chairman Todd asked if the town has access to a survey system. Commissioner Resutek suggested using Survey Monkey. Vice Chairman Todd suggested using past site visit survey questions. Ms. Houlihan stated they would have to take a more in depth look at a strategic plan and possibly ask other communities for a copy of their plans as a guideline, which would be a longer-term goal. Vice Chairman Todd suggested that if the partnership develops with the high school then that would satisfy criteria number 27. In connection with criteria number 25, Ms. Houlihan didn't include the CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center) proposal as an attachment to the agenda because the quoted dollar amount is confidential, but it's well over the budget for Go Local. Ms. Houlihan suggested exploring a business retention and expansion program as a long-term goal.

Commissioner Platt explained his efforts in attaining a master's degree and introduced a special initiative of creating a disaster management, hazardous mitigation plan and team up with the Emergency Management Office to address emergency situations and strategies to facilitate getting community businesses functioning post disaster. Ms. Houlihan explained that Ellington worked with Capitol Region Council of Governments and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to adopt a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan which addresses some of the issues mentioned by Commissioner Platt, such as back-up generators at fueling stations. Vice Chairman Todd suggested packaging together directions for where businesses can find resources, such as development loans or state funds to apply for back-up generators. Commissioner Platt pointed out that if a business doesn't have a business continuity plan this will delay FEMA funds.

Ms. Houlihan suggested the members select 3 items from the CEDAS Best Practices criteria to focus on achieving over the next year. Vice Chairman Todd suggested Commissioner Platt put together an outline for a natural disaster business recovery plan.

4. Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs

There was nothing to report.

5. Report: Current Economic Activity

Ms. Houlihan reported the updates are the same as last month. LuAnn's Bakery is the only known tenant in the new Big Y West building; Big Y will have a gas station and convenience store - Big Y Express. Earthlight and Barnyard have applied for a zone change to change the entire parcel to all commercial for the property between where Barnyard is now and Big Y West. Earthlight has future plans for office and a large solar

farm in the back of the property and Barnyard wants to expand storage, retail, and commercial space and connect their two parcels with a covered pedestrian bridge.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the November 13, 2019 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (PLATT) SECONDED (RESUTEK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 13, 2019 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED WITH THE FOLLOWING: PAGE 1, PARAGRAPH 2 CHANGE THE WORD ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST AND PAGE 3, SECOND PARAGRAPH UNDER REPORT: CURRENT ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, CHANGE THE WORD ADDITIONAL TO ADDITION.

2. Correspondence:

- a. EDC budget as of October 31, 2019.

Ms. Houlihan reported the budget for contracted services is \$2,800.00. The commission discussed potentially using the funds for CEDAS and a recognition program.

- b. Connecticut Economic Resource Center Self-Assessment results – August 2016 and Business Retention & Attraction Strategy Proposal.

Item was discussed under Active Business, number 3, CEDAS report. Ms. Houlihan suggested an elevator speech and Vice Chairman Todd suggested a seven second speech be created. Ms. Houlihan mentioned the CEDAS site finder fee. Commissioner Resutek pointed out there is a flow chart included in the report. Ms. Houlihan suggested a future networking meeting, sending invites via mail and reaching out to local realtors and outside developers to create a list of available properties. Vice Chairman asked if the CEDAS site could be routed back to the Ellington website.

- c. 2019 Plan of Conservation & Development - Adopted as amended October 28, 2019, Effective November 30, 2019.

Vice Chairman Todd stated this was already discussed and commissioners will review the specific recommendations before the next meeting for further discussion.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (RESUTEK) SECONDED (PLATT) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Post, Recording Clerk